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Provisional summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 10 July 2002 at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Šimonović ..... (Croatia)
later: Ms. Rasi (Vice-President) ..... (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (E/2002/12 and Corr.1, 56, 62 and 73)

1. **The President** said that in his recent discussion with the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly, it had been concluded that the Economic and Social Council's comparative advantage was its great potential for coordination, both within the United Nations system and between the United Nations system and other relevant organizations. It was, for example, attempting to improve cooperation and coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions, a matter which would be considered in the coordination segment and in greater detail in the general segment.

2. The Council was also making every effort to enhance its coordination of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. In informal consultations, a consensus had been reached on the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, in which the Council would play a vital coordinating role and capitalize on its potential to attract donors, non-governmental organizations and academics.

3. The Council would organize a meeting of chairpersons of its functional commissions in order to review their multi-year work programmes, explore possibilities for improving cooperation, avoiding overlap and refining working methods and discuss ways of enhancing the participation of non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the work of the functional commissions. With 2,300 accredited non-governmental organizations and approximately 800 other candidates whose applications were awaiting review, the Council was making every effort to accelerate the process for granting consultative status.

4. He hoped that the Council's deliberations during the coordination segment would be informed by the spirit of cooperation which had prevailed since the Monterrey Consensus.

5. *Ms. Rasi, Finland, Vice-President, took the Chair.*

6. **The President** said that over the past year the Council had made progress in establishing a clearer division of labour with the General Assembly and imparting focus to its work. Two panels during the coordination segment, one on follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and the United Nations conferences and summits, the other on reform within the Council, would provide guidance to the Council's deliberations.

7. The key challenge facing the Council was to promote integrated and coordinated follow-up of the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development and other major United Nations gatherings within a balanced and coherent framework. The Council must develop a more integrated approach to monitoring, policy review and operational activities and to the oversight and management of its subsidiary machinery. It must deepen its cooperation and coordination with the Security Council and the General Assembly in order to avoid overlaps with those organs. It must strengthen its capacity to contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention from a development perspective. Lastly, it must continue to reform its working methods, perhaps by modifying various segments in order to sharpen their focus and heighten their impact.

8. **The Deputy Secretary-General** said that the rationale for ongoing efforts to strengthen the Council and follow-up to United Nations conferences was clear. The age-old plague of poverty remained as daunting as ever. Inequality within and among nations was growing, with troubling implications. Globalization offered endless opportunities to raise standards of living, but as yet too many people had remained on the margins, unable to enjoy its benefits. A strong and effective Council was essential for the United Nations to be able to play a leading role in helping the people of the world achieve a better future for themselves and their children.

9. The international community's understanding of the economic and social problems confronting it and of the actions necessary to tackle them had improved significantly thanks to the conferences of the 1990s. Those conferences had mobilized Governments, civil society groups, the private sector and others around a common vision of economic and social progress and had created a common policy framework which now guided the actions of all the entities of the United Nations system.

10. That cycle of conferences had reached a culmination of sorts with the Millennium Summit, which had adopted a remarkably clear Declaration that captured the aspirations of the times and established the Millennium development goals as the global frame of reference for all efforts to achieve economic and social progress.

11. Since then, the effort to develop policy and strategies had deepened, with additional conferences and special sessions on AIDS, hunger, the rights of children and the plight of the least developed countries. Emerging issues such as ageing, which would soon be as relevant to developing countries as it was today to developed countries, had also been given unprecedented attention, as the United Nations fulfilled its essential role of putting tomorrow's issues on today's agenda.

12. The recent Conference on Financing for Development and the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development stood out as particularly significant because the issues they covered had a direct impact on the achievement of all the goals set by the other conferences. The concept of sustainability that would be at the heart of the Johannesburg Summit must be applied to all United Nations strategies. And the implementation of the commitments made at Monterrey to generate more resources for development remained urgent if the United Nations was to realize its goals.

13. Making an effective contribution to the realization of the goals set at the various United Nations conferences and the implementation of their plans of action would test all the Council's capacities for achieving policy coherence, monitoring progress and guiding the work of the United Nations system. That was by no means an easy task. A complex set of interconnected issues and a broad range of actors must be dealt with. Yet, as the Council had rightly decided, the follow-up must be done in an integrated fashion, lest the interconnections were lost and the sum became less than the parts. That was why the Council and the Secretariat must continue to improve their approach and their method of work.

14. She knew that the Council had already done much to strengthen itself. It had established a regular dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions. In guiding the work of the functional commissions, it had focused on identifying common themes emerging from the conferences of the 1990s so as to promote greater coherence. It had helped to strengthen the resident coordinator system, and simplified rules and procedures for operational activities. The Council had also established very productive links with civil society and the private sector. The report of the Secretary-General in document E/2002/62 contained a number of additional suggestions which the Council might wish to consider.

15. The aim must be to make the Council the United Nations system's leading development forum, a place where thinkers, policy makers and practitioners could come together and provide intellectual leadership in development policy. It must ensure that actions taken by the various parts of the United Nations system were properly sequenced, coordinated and mutually reinforcing so as to maximize overall progress. Through its various segments, the Council had a unique capacity to orient and affect not only the analytical work of the system but also its operational activities for development and its humanitarian work.

16. The Council also had a responsibility to monitor progress towards the achievement of the goals set by the various conferences. Such monitoring provided the essential feedback against which policies and strategies could be assessed and adjusted as necessary. The Council's oversight of the Statistical Commission was particularly useful in that regard, as was its work with the funds and programmes that carried out country-level monitoring.

17. One particular question Council members might wish to address was the respective roles of the Council and the General Assembly in relation to the economic and social parts of the Secretary-General's reports on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration. It would be helpful to define more clearly the division of labour between those two United Nations organs.

18. As delegations were aware, the Secretary-General intended to submit to the General Assembly in September a number of proposals aimed at further strengthening the Organization, particularly in its work in the economic and social area. The starting point was the same as for the discussions that would take place in the Council over the next few days: how to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in the pursuit of the goals set by the Member States at the Millennium Assembly and the various conferences.

19. The report would address a number of questions. Did the current programme of work respond adequately to the priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration and other major policy frameworks and, if not, what issues would require greater attention over the coming years? Could the reports prepared for the General Assembly and other organs be improved to permit a more comprehensive and holistic consideration of the complex, interconnected issues the Council was grappling with, while reducing their number and length as much as possible? Was the division of labour among the various entities sufficiently clear, with regard to both analytical work and technical assistance, so as to avoid duplication, provide greater transparency and develop real expertise in the entity best placed to assume the responsibility? How could the Organization's analytical capacity be strengthened so as to provide Member States with better input to their debate and ensure that the United Nations could play a strong leadership role in economic and social development issues? What steps needed to be taken to further tighten coordination at the country level so that the United Nations, building on the significant achievements of the past five years, could continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of its services to Member States and fulfil the mandates given to it? Combined with the measures the Council itself was taking to reinforce its own procedures and approaches, the pragmatic measures the Secretary-General intended to propose could help significantly to reinforce the impact of the Organization's work in the social and economic area. She knew that was a goal that everyone shared and hoped the session of the Council would be productive and would lead to new improvements in the Council's work.

20. In recent years, the Council had taken on new life, and was being rediscovered for the potential it offered as a catalyst for enlightened policy and creative partnerships. She urged the Council to do its utmost to ensure that the revitalization continued, so that the Council and the United Nations in the broadest sense would be better able to serve the world's peoples. The benefits would be felt far beyond the walls of the Council Chamber and that was what really mattered.

21. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (E/2002/62), said that the two main strands of the review of the Council — substantive follow-up to the major conferences and the Millennium Declaration, and procedural streamlining and rationalizing processes — were closely related and interdependent. Rationalizing and simplifying did not mean undoing complexities but rather articulating them and replacing analyses by syntheses in Secretariat reports. At the same time, however, the Council should not lose sight of the distinctive contribution made by each process in policy development and policy-making.

22. The fact that the Council had been engaged in restructuring and reform more than any other United Nations organ was a reflection of its vitality and continuous striving to adapt to new challenges. It was also an indicator of the growing priority of development cooperation in international affairs, as illustrated by the central place of development objectives in the Millennium Declaration and the growing expectations that the international community had of the Council. The Council had been given a clear mandate in the Millennium Declaration to carry out a review, whose importance was amplified by the Monterrey Consensus and the tasks that would be defined by the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

23. There were many factors, both in the institutional environment in which the Council operated, and within the Council itself, that made its further strengthening especially promising. With regard to the Council's environment, he noted the renewed reform effort within the Organization and, within the wider United Nations system, an unprecedented unity of purpose around the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The Council should strengthen those aspects of its methods of work which had helped to create that environment and should enhance its capacity to reap the full benefit from it. The network of functional commissions had launched most of the 1990s conferences, and it was the Council itself that had pioneered the concept of "integrated follow-up to conferences" at the centre of the current effort to strengthen its role.

24. The aim of the Secretary-General's report was twofold: to achieve a certain thematic unity for the whole of the Council's work in any given year and link it to the overall process of implementing the Millennium Declaration; and to identify aspects of its

work where its added value needed to be sharpened or its contribution deepened in the perspective of the Millennium Declaration. Although, in recent years, the Council had addressed major cross-cutting themes, it was not yet at the point where the themes for its segments were deliberately geared to bringing about mutual reinforcement or were inspired by a clear sense of sequencing priorities with a view to advancing the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The report of the Secretary-General made some suggestions on improvements which the Council might consider in that regard, including the introduction of a close link between the themes of the high-level and coordination segments. The added value of both the high-level and the coordination segments was their capacity to sharpen the focus and enhance the Council's systematic contribution to policy development and harmonization of activities in promoting the follow-up to the conferences and the Millennium Declaration. The same held true with regard to the Council's management role and its interaction with its functional commissions and other bodies reporting to it.

25. Beyond the well-established triennial policy review process, strengthening the added value of operational activities segment would mean engaging in substantive dialogue with the funds and programmes and their boards and providing them clear policy guidance on major cross-cutting issues. Furthermore, in alternate years, the Council might serve as a forum for an inclusive, well-prepared international debate at the ministerial level on key challenges of development cooperation. Similar considerations would apply with regard to the humanitarian segment. While it might not be possible for the Council to act during the session on all the elements of reform and improvement outlined in the report, it must continue to move forward and maintain the momentum generated by the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus.

26. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Observer for Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while the Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the three major issues outlined in the report of the Secretary-General, it believed that it would be premature to consider follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits before the World Summit on Sustainable Development had actually been held. The Council's role in following up the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus should be discussed in the general segment, and the coordination segment of the current session should focus on certain cross-cutting themes, such as poverty eradication, and on improving the Council's working methods.

27. While some coordination between the themes of the coordination and high-level segments might be useful, linking them back to back could result in repetition. The interrelated issues of specific follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits and the work of the functional commissions should be considered together in the general segment. Since follow-up of the implementation of the millennium development goals was within the competence of the General Assembly, the Council's role in that regard was to assist the General Assembly in discharging its overall responsibilities.

28. Strengthening the Council's cooperation with other principal organs and improved oversight and management of its subsidiary machinery involved a number of complex and sensitive issues that would require careful and detailed discussion. Owing to their sensitive nature and because some of those issues were related to current processes being considered in the General Assembly, the Group of 77 and China felt they should be addressed at a later stage.

29. As for improving the Council's working methods, flexibility in scheduling the Council's meetings could be vital in situations requiring urgent attention. That flexibility, however, including the ability to schedule additional sessions, was already provided for under the current rules of procedure. The Group of 77 and China did not believe that shortening the Council's substantive session and reorganizing its humanitarian and operational activities segment would help to meet the demands for policy coherence, comprehensive and multisectoral policy responses based on partnerships and robust international cooperation. Moreover, since the July substantive session did not conflict with other meetings, it gave small delegations, most of them members of the Group of 77, an opportunity to attend the entire substantive session. In order to increase the reach and impact of the operational activities segment, greater country ownership and additional funding would be crucial.

30. Where the proposals related to the general segment were concerned, the Group of 77 and China wished to highlight the importance of the Council's oversight function. Beyond mere managerial functions,

the Council should review the reports of its functional commissions in order to provide clear policy guidance to each one, particularly to those involved in the follow-up and review of the implementation of major United Nations conferences. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of engaging non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local authorities, parliamentarians, universities and other non-State actors in the work of the Council. As the issue was currently being considered systematically in the General Assembly's private partnership resolution, the Council should avoid duplication of that work.

31. **Mr. Moesby** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Millennium Declaration and its development goals lay at the centre of the economic and social activities of the United Nations and should guide the work of the Council, the Council's functional commissions, the General Assembly and the United Nations funds and programmes. The task facing the Council was to ensure that the United Nations was a vital, energetic and operational player in economic and social matters in the twenty-first century.

32. When the Council had met in 2000 and 2001, it had attempted without success to find ways to follow up the results of major United Nations conferences and summits. The European Union believed that five-year and ten-year follow-up meetings for such conferences and summits should not be automatic: they should be held only where warranted. Follow-up activities should be undertaken by existing structures, particularly the Council and its functional commissions. No new structures should be set up. It was important to remember that taking action to fulfil conference and summit decisions was primarily the responsibility of Governments. The Council could play a role where its specific expertise, for example in the functional commissions, was appropriate. Everything should be done to ensure wide representation of experts on those commissions, which in the case of developing countries might involve voluntary contributions to costs from developed countries. Effective conference follow-up required a limited number of reliable indicators, and the European Union would be taking a close interest in the work of the Statistical Commission and other Council bodies in that connection.

33. The Monterrey Consensus provided an important building block in following up the implementation not just of the Millennium Declaration, but also of subsequent events such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development. An important innovation of the Monterrey Consensus was its call for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Bretton Woods institutions to be engaged in dialogue with the Council. The European Union took the view that the Council should devote attention to organizing that dialogue. In addition, other stakeholders, particularly non-governmental participants, the private sector and civil society, needed to be involved in the work of the Council. Ways also had to be found to attract senior policy makers to Council by selecting content that was of interest to them. Rationalizing the way in which the Council conducted its day-to-day business, with a clear division of labour between its bodies, was an important way to encourage the tackling of genuinely substantive issues.

34. The European Union believed that, in addition to following up major United Nations conferences and other events, the Council had a central role to play in mainstreaming sustainable development into the entire United Nations system. It wished to see the next high-level segment devoted to global public goods. It also very much supported the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2002/12 and Corr.1) as an important step towards bridging critical gaps between peace-building, relief, reconstruction and long-term development, with the Council and the Security Council contributing to an integrated approach to conflict, peace and development in Africa.

35. **Mr. De Lara** (Mexico) said that the Economic and Social Council needed to be made stronger to enable it to cope with the challenges created by globalization and fulfil the functions assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations. A key objective must be to establish linkages between the various United Nations conferences and summits, which had their own purpose and identity but shared a focus on sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

36. It was appropriate against that background that the Council should be seeking to forge a strategic alliance with all the organizations of the United Nations system, including the international financial and trade institutions, to translate the Millennium development goals and the objectives of the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences into action.

37. Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which had placed sustainable development at the centre of the international economic agenda, deserved particular attention. If such implementation was to be achieved, its follow-up needed commitment and a high political profile. The links that had been built up during the preparation of the Monterrey conference also had to be preserved, so that the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO would work together with civil society and the private sector to promote development financing. The Council's high-level segment provided a further opportunity to collaborate with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO.

38. The pursuit of sustainable development and poverty eradication were closely bound up with the maintenance and consolidation of peace and were the best way of tackling the root causes of conflict. Together with the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Council could play an active role in that field by providing a forum for wide-ranging debate on the subject of conflict, its causes, and the role of development in preventing it.

39. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that the Council should make greater use of its powers under the Charter of the United Nations to coordinate conflict prevention and peace-building efforts within the United Nations system. The Russian Federation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to forge a closer relationship between the three principal organs for that purpose and for providing an efficient transition from emergency aid to reconstruction and sustainable development. A positive step in that direction was the current focus on establishing an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, which could serve as a good example of collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council pursuant to Article 65 of the Charter. The Secretary-General had suggested that a future Council high-level segment, which could be scheduled for 2003, should discuss the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention.

40. One of the Council's most important roles was to develop effective, coordinated and integrated ways of monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome document of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It could usefully take up that discussion after the Johannesburg Summit. Another matter for urgent discussion was implementation of the Monterrey Consensus provisions on optimizing relations between the Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO.

41. Rethinking the operation of the Council on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B would improve its ability to take action on priority issues. However, any changes to the Council's working methods needed to be justified on the basis of added value. Subdividing the substantive session of the Council and reducing its duration were not advisable, as a dilution of the Council's political weight might result. In fact, a longer session might be justified on the grounds that the Council was being asked to fulfil an increasing number of functions. Nor was it advisable to separate the humanitarian segment from the substantive session, in particular from the discussion of development issues, notwithstanding the desire to smooth the transition from humanitarian aid to reconstruction and development.

42. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the observer for Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77. It was encouraged by the dialogue that had taken place at the spring 2002 meeting of the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, and particularly its conclusion that agendas at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels had to remain coherent.

43. Promoting sustainable development in a way that integrated social, economic and environmental dimensions was also an important function of the Council. It needed to pursue cohesion and integration with its functional commissions, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development, and with other subsidiary bodies with a part to play in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

44. His delegation welcomed the Council's decision to make the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 a regular sub-item at its substantive sessions.

45. Peace and security were a prerequisite for economic prosperity and growth, a principle that was upheld in Bangladesh's Constitution. Peace-building needed to be seen as part of a continuous process involving conflict prevention and development. His

delegation particularly welcomed the proposed establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and hoped that it would liaise with the working group set up by the Security Council to monitor activities regarding conflicts in Africa.

46. Discussion on how to strengthen the Council should focus on three matters. First, harmonizing and coordinating the activities, programmes and strategies of the Council's functional commissions. Second, building a partnership between the Council and the United Nations funds and programmes in order to implement the Millennium development goals. Third, careful review of the report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, for the sake of effective coordination of the various Council segments.

47. The Council needed to provide an effective and flexible response to the needs of the times. Special sessions on issues which were of relevance to the developing countries, such as information and communication technologies, capacity-building and public administration for development would be especially useful. It was essential for the Council to avoid duplication and repetitiveness, though the issues dealt with could span several segments of a session. It needed above all to be made more efficient, viable and effective. With common resolve, that goal could be achieved.

48. **Mr. Mizukami** (Japan) said that strengthening of the Council was required in three areas. First, action was needed to ensure integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and events, especially in the light of the "review fatigue" among the Member States and within the United Nations system. The follow-up process should be results-oriented and systematic and should avoid duplication and fragmentation. A clear division of labour was needed between the General Assembly, the Council and the various subsidiary bodies, with the subsidiary bodies focusing on conference and summit follow-up, and the Council reviewing overlapping or cross-cutting themes. The General Assembly should resist calling review meetings five or ten years after a major conference or summit simply because the appropriate anniversary had been reached. Reviews should be saved for occasions of real need, when political decisions were required. Second, action was needed with respect to the Monterrey Consensus, which marked a broad agreement on a coherent, coordinated and cooperative approach to follow-up activities, inside and outside the United Nations system. The Council should perform its essential coordinating role by eliminating duplication and redundancy. The holistic and inclusive nature of the thinking that had originally led to the Monterrey Consensus needed to be preserved. Third, action was needed to ensure that any change in the working methods of the Council furthered progress towards the development goals and other targets contained in the Millennium Declaration. In that connection, Japan believed that the proposal made by the Secretary-General to hold a two-day high-level meeting as part of the Council's operational segment as a "development cooperation forum" was useful.

49. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that the Doha development agenda and the Monterrey Consensus had provided a framework for implementing the ambitious development goals set in the Millennium Declaration. The major international conferences of the 1990s had brought broad agreement on democracy, free markets, sustainability and human rights as the ingredients of successful development. The recent round of conferences had brought awareness that tackling poverty required realistic targets. That marked a change in the common approach to development, with a focus which had moved from aspirations to quantified and achievable objectives. Donors had committed themselves to providing resources, while developing nations had committed themselves to addressing governance issues.

50. The Council, with its unique coordinating function, could serve as a venue for measuring and assessing international progress. That role had been set out in the Monterrey Consensus, and it was time for the Council to demonstrate its ability to perform it. The report of the Secretary-General had recognized the importance of building on recent reforms to give the United Nations system greater guidance and coordination. Reform of the Council had been a long process, with General Assembly resolutions in the past having made similar calls for it to better coordinate, integrate, foster support for and advertise its development role. The main challenge before the Council was therefore one of implementation, both of the development agenda and of its own mandates and procedures. The Council's members, Bureau and secretariat needed to rise to that challenge, avoiding

lengthy debate and putting into effect its coordination mandate.

51. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) said that the theme under debate was on the agenda because of the clear perception that, despite advances in recent years, much remained to be done to render the Council more relevant. In stating the purposes of the United Nations, the Charter gave equal weight to the maintenance of peace, the defence of human rights and the promotion of economic, social and cultural progress. The Security Council had been created to deal with the first task, the Economic and Social Council to deal with the second and third tasks, and the General Assembly to be the main deliberative body and provide overall policy guidance. The Charter assigned fairly general functions to the Economic and Social Council but had little to say about how it was to relate with the other organs. It had fallen to the General Assembly to clarify the role of the Council in a series of resolutions, notably resolution 50/227, but a more precise definition was required so that form could follow function.

52. The role of the Council should be defined, not in isolation, but with reference to the General Assembly and the Security Council. Greater rationality and coherence in the work of the Organization must begin with acceptance of a scheme of functional specialization that flowed from the universal body, the General Assembly, to the more specialized organs. Agreement was needed on how to apportion tasks between the Assembly, especially its Second and Third Committees, and the Economic and Social Council in matters relating to the formulation of policies and the adoption of concrete actions for economic and social development. His delegation favoured a decentralized scheme, in which the main function of the Council would be to ensure coherence, offer an overall vision and formulate more refined versions of the strategic orientations originating in the General Assembly. Responsibility for providing guidance to the operational funds and programmes on concrete actions should be delegated to their executive boards, which were, after all intergovernmental bodies. Similarly, it would be advisable to delegate such primary responsibility to the regional economic commissions (the intergovernmental bodies, not their secretariats) for activities in their respective regions and to the functional commissions in their areas.

53. The scheme would require further improvements in the mechanisms for communication, information and consultation. Recent initiatives, such as the meeting of the Presidents of the three principal organs of the United Nations, the consultations conducted by the Bureau of the Council with the bureaux of its subsidiary organs and the systematic effort to promote dialogue among all parties were steps in the right direction. The relationship with the Security Council also needed to be better defined in the area of consolidating the peace in post-conflict and even conflict-prevention situations. The recent decision to establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2002/12) was a significant step forward in that regard.

54. His delegation welcomed the recent advances in converting the Economic and Social Council into a high-level forum for economic and social issues, attracting the participation of high government officials from ministries of finance, foreign affairs, economic planning, education and public health. The Council's comparative advantage in that respect should be further utilized. The Secretary-General's report on strengthening the Council (E/2002/62) offered some useful suggestions to improve working methods, and his delegation's specific observations on them could be read in its written statement. Lastly, the mandates contained in paragraph 69 of the Monterrey Consensus were so significant that they could well leave a permanent imprint on the way in which the Council organized its work and interacted with the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations; that topic would be further debated in the general segment.

55. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that the mandate of the Economic and Social Council set out in the Charter was broad and had to be constantly adapted to changing circumstances. In the past 50 years, while prosperity had increased, poverty had also, and development had proved to be a more difficult and complex task than originally envisaged. Ideas for strengthening the Council had been debated for some 30 years. The Council's potential was considerable but remained unfulfilled. With its broad mandate, it was well placed to generate international cooperation and to foster partnership among Governments, the private sector, civil society and regional and global organizations.

56. Although follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration was basically the responsibility of the General Assembly, the Council

could also play a significant role in addressing the development aspect of the Declaration by coordinating and supervising the activities of its subsidiary organs and providing policy direction. His delegation felt strongly that the Council should assume responsibility for promoting economic coordination at the global level among international organizations and the main economic players. It could benefit from the expertise of specialized bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), whose insights were perceptive and whose prognoses of impending economic crisis were often more accurate than those of better-known organizations.

57. The Council was the United Nations body mandated by the Charter to engage other stakeholders. The Monterrey Consensus had assigned the Council the role of engaging with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in order to pursue an integrated follow-up of the commitments made at the Monterrey Conference. The Council should not lose that momentum but should devise modalities for substantive dialogue to develop system-wide recommendations and guidelines for implementation, at both the national and international levels, of the commitments made at that and other conferences. It should also provide for follow-up evaluation.

58. In the age of globalization and complex crises, the roles of the three main organs of the United Nations had become more interdependent and should be complementary. His delegation agreed that the Council should devote a future high-level segment of its annual substantive session to the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention, and it supported the proposal that the regional commissions should play an active role in discussions on the prevention of armed conflicts. It welcomed the establishment of the ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. However, because of the importance of the Council's coordinating role, it could not concur with the proposal to shorten the duration of the operational activities segment.

59. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) welcomed the Secretary-General's realistic and comprehensive appraisal of the challenges facing the Council, agreed that there was a clear need for a platform for coordinating follow-up to recent summits and said that he looked forward to upcoming discussions on follow-up, which would provide an opportunity for systematic debate on the role of the Council.

60. He supported the proposal to shorten the July session; a shortened and more focused session would enhance interest in the work of the Council and stimulate participation, and greater flexibility in scheduling meetings throughout the year would enable the Council to take up emerging issues as necessary. He also supported the idea of holding the coordination segment back to back with the high-level segment, with the two segments choosing the same topic or related ones. The high-level segment should be concerned with substantive policy debate while the coordination segment should focus on system-wide follow-up to the high-level discussions.

61. The Secretary-General's proposal to hold joint meetings or exchanges with the boards of specialized agencies, funds and programmes would facilitate interaction between the Council and operational structures. The general segment was overloaded with housekeeping issues, which could be dealt with at the spring or autumn sessions rather than the annual substantive session. The Council would then be in a position to hold a more thorough policy debate in the general segment, provide guidance to subsidiary bodies and functional commissions and thus strengthen its management focus. The format of outcomes from the different segments should also be reviewed because the "agreed conclusions" were not necessarily conducive to action-oriented follow up. He supported the idea of improving the management of the Council's subsidiary machinery, so that it could work more closely with the Council as part of the same system.

62. Improvements could also be made regarding the documentation submitted to the Council. Documents, which were often available only a few days before they were dealt with, were too descriptive and were not sufficiently action-oriented. There were too many reports, and in many cases written reports were issued where oral reports would have sufficed. He fully endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations on building a clearer architecture for the various types of reports and for avoiding duplication and overlap.

63. Concrete proposals had been made for strengthening the role of the Council/Bretton Woods institutions spring meeting, which should be extended to a whole day in order to be able to coordinate follow-up to the Monterrey Conference. Broad dialogue

between those institutions, the Council and WTO should be facilitated both before and during the meeting.

64. The Secretary-General had also made valuable recommendations on how the Council could contribute more actively to peace-building and conflict prevention and some interesting suggestions for facilitating accreditation procedures and enhancing the use of observer status, which would play an important role in developing a strong partnership between the private sector, non-governmental organizations, Governments and international institutions.

65. **Mr. Maquieira** (Chile) said that General Assembly resolution 50/227 could be taken as the point of departure in examining ways to strengthen the Council's capacity to fulfil its mandate and realize its great potential. However, much had changed since then, and the Council was now facing new challenges as a result of the Millennium Summit and the International Conference on Financing for Development. Moreover, its revitalization was part of a general reform of the economic and social area on which the Secretary-General was preparing recommendations to be considered at the next session of the General Assembly. A reform of the Council's working methods should cover three areas: the various segments of the Council's substantive work, its dealings with its subsidiary organs and its relations with the rest of the United Nations system.

66. The suggestions for changing the Council's working methods presented in the Secretary-General's report (E/2002/62) were appropriate and reasonable. The present format and timing of the substantive session prevented a thorough consideration of the themes selected for the high-level, coordination, operational-activities and humanitarian segments. Separating the different segments and holding them at different times throughout the year would allow somewhat more time for each segment and would also enable the Council to harmonize its calendar with those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which was of particular importance in view of the shared mandates resulting from global conferences. His delegation also felt that the International Labour Organization (ILO) should be made a regular partner, not an occasional guest, at the policy dialogue conducted with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO. In addition, a mechanism should be established for dialogue with civil society, perhaps through a meeting with the Bureau. In terms of outcomes, currently only the general segment resulted in resolutions. Although his delegation was not proposing that resolutions should be adopted in other segments, some modality should be found to give substance and continuity to useful ideas or proposals that met with consensus during those segments, and they should certainly be reported to the General Assembly.

67. With regard to integrated follow-up to major global conferences, the Council should pay more attention to the impact of the conferences and follow-up at the national level. It would be useful, sometime during the Council session, to hold a meeting of the Bureau with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to explore ideas on the subject.

68. The Council should play a major role in conflict prevention and peace-building. Article 65 of the Charter provided that the Economic and Social Council should assist the Security Council at its request. While the difficulties inherent in setting up structured relations between the two organs should not be minimized, it would nevertheless be useful to institute a dialogue to explore points of contact and continuity, in the spirit of the Charter. The normal meetings between the Presidents of the two Councils could be the starting point and might be supplemented by a meeting of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council with the current and next four Presidents of the Security Council. The Security Council might, in its resolutions, ask the Economic and Social Council to supervise economic and social reconstruction in given instances. The establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict illustrated the possibilities for increased collaboration.

69. If the above proposals for its revitalization were adopted, the Council would require a more effective and dynamic instrument of internal coordination. Among other things, its Bureau could be expanded from five members to 15, three for each region, thereby enhancing dialogue with the regions. Where coordination was concerned, the members of the Council must look to themselves and not to others to find solutions to the problems.

70. **Mr. Stuart** (Australia) said that, as experience had shown, the basic problems that had led to the reforms envisaged in General Assembly resolution 50/227 had not been resolved. The Council did not

have the role or the impact that most Members States felt that it should have. The burgeoning agenda of the Second and Third Committees had cut across areas where the Council should have been the main forum in the United Nations. As a result, many issues were debated with tiresome repetition. The duplication and blurring of roles had weakened the Council. Similarly, the activism of the more successful of the functional commissions had limited the Council's role and profile. That was a more positive development, however, and his delegation would by no means advocate lessening the role of the Commission on Human Rights or the Commission on the Status of Women. Rather, the Council needed to play a distinct role, utilizing its unique position to act in areas requiring coordination. Another reason for the weakness of the Council's substantive outcomes was that some delegations unfortunately valued membership on the Council chiefly as an opportunity to vote in the elections for other bodies and advance candidatures.

71. The Council had also been a casualty of the tendency to resort to mega-conferences and summits to address major issues in the United Nations. On themes central to its mandate, such as fighting pandemics, helping the most vulnerable economies and promoting sustainable development, the Council had been marginalized. The excessive number of special processes had not only led to an unmanageable calendar and heavy costs but also lessened the impact of the work of the Council. His delegation agreed with the statement of Denmark, speaking for the European Union, that the process of follow-up reviews to major United Nations conferences should be carefully scrutinized. Similarly, to embark on new exercises risked diluting commitment to existing, internationally agreed goals and diverting attention from the task of implementation. Given its mandate, the Council should be at the heart of the implementation effort because of its relationship with the bodies capable of delivering programmes and technical assistance and its express role in coordinating the economic and social activities of the United Nations.

72. Another source of weakness was the limited composition of the Council. It was time to revive the radical but by no means new idea of allowing all Member States to participate with equal status. Open-ended membership would remove the main objection raised by Member States to using the Council as the forum to consider pressing international issues in the economic and social arena. It would provide the precondition for a more rigorous division of labour between the work of the General Assembly and the Council. It would overcome concerns about lack of equitable geographical distribution in the Council and, if extended to them, the Council's subsidiary bodies.

73. His delegation had concluded that, first, the United Nations should not be pursuing new global conferences but instead concentrating on implementing the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the other recent major conferences. Second, the review processes for the conferences should be conducted through the Council or its functional commissions. If necessary, the Council or the General Assembly could decide to hold such reviews at the ministerial level, but the unmanageable timetable of recent years should be avoided. Lastly, the Council's advantage in coordinating and addressing issues that overlapped the mandates of the functional commissions should be developed. Those were the central challenges to be met if the international system was to provide effective assistance to Member States in implementing the key goals agreed at the Millennium Summit.

74. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru) said that the Council must reinforce its role in three crucial areas. It must serve as a high-level policy forum on economic, social and related issues in order to ensure that globalization benefited all countries and that development occurred within the context of a coherent commercial and financial system. As the coordinating mechanism for operational activities it must develop clear policies on improving the relevance and impact of operational activities. Its monitoring role must also be strengthened to ensure understanding of and implementation of international commitments in the economic and social spheres.

75. In order to fulfil that important mandate, the Council must improve its capacity for action and its working methods, and to that end he supported proposals to rationalize its programme of work, raise the political profile of its various segments and better define the agendas of its functional commissions. Scheduling of meetings throughout the year, however, could place a heavy burden on smaller delegations such as his own and would not necessarily ensure the desired political representativity.

76. In order to become more relevant, the Council should deal with new issues and adapt a more holistic

approach while at the same time avoiding duplication. It must involve more stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society and multilateral development, financial and trade institutions, in order to ensure that actions for economic and social development were truly effective in the field. Further reforms involving the mandate and composition of the Council and deepening of its relations with the Second and Third Committees should also be considered. The current membership of 54 was not sufficiently representative when dealing with issues of concern to all Member States.

77. The Council had a key role to play in the evaluation of and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits. Thanks to the efforts of recent years, the international community now had the key elements of a master plan for dealing with the major challenges facing humanity: poverty, social exclusion, fragile democracy and economic stagnation.

78. Effective follow-up at the national level was essential, and his delegation fully supported the focus on poverty reduction and social development, which implied the need for good governance, an end to corruption and strengthening of the rule of law, democracy and human rights. It would however, be impossible to eradicate poverty and meet the Millennium development goals without a stable multilateral trade and financial system which facilitated economic growth and sustainable development and in which the developing countries participated fully.

79. Conflict prevention and the consolidation of peace required an integrated approach which included addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in conflict prevention. The Council should propose system-wide strategies in that area while also recognizing the responsibility of the countries concerned. Dialogue with the Security Council must be strengthened as should liaison with regional bodies and non-governmental organizations which could play a constructive role in conflict prevention and follow-up to regional initiatives; Council representatives might also participate in Security Council missions in the field.

80. With regard to the ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, he stressed the importance of the development of long-term programmes of action, the success of which would depend on the level of political and financial support they received; no funds should however be diverted from other programmes.

81. The case of Haiti was a test of the effectiveness of the Organization as a whole and of the Council in particular in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-building. Efforts there must succeed and the Council should continue to consider ways of strengthening long-term efforts to assist Haiti.

82. **Mr. Sun** Xiaobo (China) associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said he wished to address the issue of reform of the work of the Council. In keeping with its mandate and in order to strengthen assistance to developing countries, the Council's methods of work should be reformed where necessary with a view to improving its efficiency, avoiding duplication and strengthening coordination, management and oversight of its functional commissions. Reforms should not, however, be undertaken simply for the sake of change. His delegation would work with other delegations to review the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General bearing those objectives in mind.

83. The Council was also the leading coordination body within the United Nations system in the economic and social spheres and should increase its positive role in the context of integrated and coordinated implementation of follow-up to the various United Nations conferences and summits, in particuiar recent conferences in the economic and social fields devoted to the common goal of achieving development worldwide. It could also improve its positive role by facilitating follow-up by its subsidiary bodies to those conferences through enhanced oversight and guidance.

84. **Mr. Blanco Domínguez** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) reiterated his Government's commitment to working through the United Nations system to meet the Millennium development goals. He also stressed the need for the Council to fulfil its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations and develop appropriate mechanisms for follow-up to major conferences and to ensure coordination in a holistic manner of actions by its subsidiary funds and programmes to implement those same development goals.

85. He agreed with the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning review and the length and themes of the Council's substantive session and suggested that in addition to a coordinating meeting

with the Bretton Woods institutions, the Council should organize coordinating meetings with the private sector and with civil society. He was concerned, however, that progress in good governance, human rights and the rule of law were considered prerequisites for access to international development assistance. Those conditions could in some cases hinder progress towards increased peace and democracy, and he pointed out that hunger, poor living conditions and exclusion were not conducive to the development of strong political institutions.

86. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2002/56), he stressed his Government's concern at the plight of the Haitian people, which had been aggravated by the conditions imposed by international financial institutions. He reiterated the call made by the President of the Dominican Republic at the recent ministerial meeting between the Asian, Pacific and Caribbean countries and the European Union held in the Dominican Republic. The international community must provide humanitarian aid to Haiti on an urgent basis and consider the possibility of granting it special and differential treatment, given the extreme poverty and suffering of its people. Their calamitous political, economic and social situation required an unconditional response, and he urged the Council to keep the matter under review.

87. **Mr. Kazemi Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran) associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and he said that the issue of strengthening the Economic and Social Council was a complex one and would require patience and he looked forward to an open exchange of views in that regard.

88. The report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/62) noted that the Council was playing a more effective role as a high-level forum for discussion of economic and social issues, had deepened its interaction with international financial institutions and had increased its visibility in the area of development efforts. He welcomed innovative initiatives such as the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Task Force and closer interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization and suggested that other groups, for example the Chairperson of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), should also be involved in the spring meetings with a view to having a positive impact on the global financial situation.

89. He agreed with the Secretary-General that the Council must more clearly define its operational role in relationship to the General Assembly and the various executive boards and must provide clear guidance on major issues which cut across all funds and programmes. The impact of the Council's guidance on the work of the executive boards and on operational activities at the country level must also be enhanced.

90. The humanitarian and operational segments of the Council's sessions did not always attract as much attention as the high-level and coordination segments, which was attributable, at least for the operational segment, to the rather technical aspect of discussions. Given the role which the Council played as a forum for discussion of international development cooperation, a holistic approach was necessary in order to enhance its capacity and methods of work and it would not be sufficient simply to reduce the amount of time devoted to certain issues. Neither would changing the order and structure of meetings to meet the desired goal of reform. In striving to ensure implementation of development goals and meet new challenges which might require the guidance and coordination of the Council, the Council should be ready to make effective use of its time or even allocate additional time to issues as required.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.